In order to reduce expenditure on imports of petroleum products, efforts are being made to increase the refining capacity by taking up expansion of existing refineries and setting-up of new gra5sroot refineries in the public sector, joint venture and private sector besides promoting conservation of petroleum products in various fields.

Private Companies in LPG Marketing

2939. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that no private Company has so far launched the distribution of LPG for domestic use in the country despite the fact that Government had permitted pri vate trade in LPG almost a year ago;

(b) if so, what are the details and reasons therefor;

(c) what is the number of private companies which have started importing LPG with details thereof; and

(d) whether such imports have enhanced the availability of LPG in the country?

THE MINTSTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH |SHARMA): (a) to (d) Two private sector companies have so far imported about 6.1 TMT of LPG under the parallel marketing system, most of which has been sold in bulk to Industry. One company has planned to import packed LPG in cylinders and start its distribution for domestic use shortly.

Supply of Kerosene and LPG by private oil companies

2940. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that the private oil companies are coming up in a big way for supply of kerosene and LPG in India; and

(b) if so, what are the terms and conditions Government have imposed on them for regulating the oil supplies in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) The response to the parallel marketing system of kerosene and LPG by *the* pri-vate sector has been encouraging.

(b) Under the Parallel Marketing System, private agencies en import and market kerosene and LPG. using| setting up their own infrastructure and distribution net-work, at market determined prices to domestic, non-domestic and industrial customers. They are, however, required to obtain necessary approvals under the relevant Acts|Rules from Central State local authorities regarding safety, pollution control etc. as applicable. Under the LPG (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 1993, and the Kerosene (Restriction on use and Fixation of Ceiling Price) Order 1993. the parallel marketeers are required to inornate their intention and capabilities to import and sell LPG| Kerosene before commencement of such activities and submit a monthly report giving details of the products imported by them. Besides they have to furnish to the Government or to such agencies authorised by Government all relevant particulars

and information as may be required.

Prices of Gas from Oman and Iran

2941. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA;
SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY;
SHRI ANANTRAY DEV-SHANKER DAVE;
SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY;
SHRI MOHD. KHALEELUR RAHMAN;

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that gas from Oman and Iran is going to be supplied through pipelines is likely to be much higher in terms Of price compared to our gas price by 230 per cent;

(b) what is the justification of Oman and Iran for asking such high price of gas;

(c) what is the price of gas offered by Oman and Iran and what is our local price;

(d) what is the quantum of gas supply estimated from Oman and Iran pipe lines and what is the short fall today to meet registered demand of gas;

(e) what are the names of gas reserves discovered and the rate of exploitation currently; and

(f) whether coal gasification is being planned or there is any significant potential for coal gasification?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPT. SATISH SHARMA): (a) to (c) The price of the gas to be imported from Oman is being negotiated with the Oman Oil Company. No price offer has as yet been received from Iran.

(d) The Oman Oil Company has proposed the supply of about 57 MMSCMD of gas to India. The estimated shortfall by the year 2000 A.D is around 78 MMSCMD.

(e) As against the balance recoverable reserves of 700 BCM as on 1.4.1993, the current production of gas is 49.87 MMSCMD.

(f) ONGC has taken up an R&D project for Underground Coal Gasification. The techno-economic feasibility of Underground Coal Gasification is yet to be established.

Upgradation to SAG posts in Railways

2942. SHRI MD. SALIM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are any proposals under Government's consideration for upgrading nearly 150 S.A.G. Grade posts to General Managers grade by the Indian Railways;

(b) if so, whether Group 'A' and Group 'B' posts are likely to be surrendered in return; and

(c) if not, whether it is a fact that Group 'A' and 'B' officers would be stagnated and how the stagnation is proposed to be removed?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The aspect of stagnation is taken into account in the periodica] cadre reviews of gazetted servioes.

स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों को स्थायी/अस्थायी पास जारी किया जाना

2943. श्री रामदेव भंडारी: क्या रेल मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या उनका मंत्रालय उन स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों को, जिन्होंने अपने